

HIGHLIGHTS BARSTOW FIELD OFFICE

**California Desert District
Advisory Council Meeting
March 2014**

Amargosa Vole Demographic and Disease Study – Habitat Enhancement Program

BLM Action: In 2011, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) conducted a preliminary study to determine the current distribution of the Amargosa vole in the Tecopa area. During those surveys an unknown “orange fungus” infestation was found on many voles. A multi-year study is being conducted to further determine the extent of the fungus infection, the probable vector for the spread of this unknown disease, vole genetics, and vole habitat needs. This is a collaborative study between the BLM, CDFW, US Geological Service, and UC Davis.

Agency: BLM, Barstow Field Office and California State Office
CDFW
US Geological Survey (USGS)
UC Davis
UC Berkley

Contact: Chris Otahal, Wildlife Biologist, Barstow Field Office

Status: The 2012 effort was mostly funded by the BLM and 2013 funding was secured by CDFW for the demographic field work. BLM has been working with UC Davis to secure funding for the continuation of the disease study through the Betty White Rapid Response Fund of the Morris Animal Foundation. The Barstow Field Office was awarded a \$24,000 grant through the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) Research Support Program in support of the genetics work. The project was expanded to start collecting information regarding potential predator influences on vole populations. Limited trapping surveys are being carried out in 2013/2014 in support of this project. The UC Davis team, in conjunction with BLM and other partners, is preparing an educational brochure regarding the vole, has completed a vole display at the Amargosa Museum in Shoshone, and is developing a web site to serve as a central clearinghouse for vole research information.

The UC Davis team recently published an article in the Journal of Parasitology regarding results from the disease study titled: Severe Ulceronecrotic Dermatitis Associated with Mite Infestation in the Critically Endangered Amargosa Vole (*Microtus Californicus Scirpensis*). The USGS team is preparing a report for BLM

summarizing the demographic work to date (draft has been received) and is working on two journal manuscripts.

In response to the precarious nature of the Amargosa Vole, the Amargosa Vole Team was chartered through the Desert Managers Group (DMG) in April 2013. The purpose of the Amargosa Vole Team (AVT) is to function as a work group to the DMG to provide a collaborative forum for BLM, USFWS, CDFW, and researchers to plan, coordinate, and implement actions that would prevent the extinction of the vole and ultimately result in its recovery. Chris Otahal is co-chair of the AVT.



The Barstow Field Office in partnership with UC Davis, UC Berkeley, and USGS is developing a NLCS Research Support Program grant to support Amargosa Vole conservation efforts. The funding would support a pilot translocation project from a sustainable source subpopulation into nearby marshes using a soft-release approach with monitoring to track animal movement, population size, disease, genetic structure, and impacts of predators and competitors prior to, during, and post translocation efforts.

The Barstow Field Office is also working with UC Davis, UC Berkeley, and USGS on developing a Section 6 Grant Proposal to provide funding for Amargosa Vole habitat creation on private lands in Shoshone (a location where voles were found historically but are now extirpated) and research into a potential captive breeding program for the vole.

The Barstow Field Office is also moving forward on a small habitat enhancement project to expand existing vole habitat in the “borehole” area in Tecopa.

Amargosa River Monitoring Studies / Management Actions

BLM Action: The Barstow Field Office is involved in various monitoring studies / management actions associated with the implementation of the draft Amargosa River ACEC/WSR Management Plan including:

- 1) Amargosa Niterwort Population Monitoring
- 2) Sensitive Bird Species Spot Mapping / Cowbird Management Program
- 3) Tamarisk Control Efforts
- 4) SCAN Monitoring
- 5) Fish Monitoring

Agencies: BLM, Barstow Field Office
BLM, California State Office
Amargosa Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy
Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO)
US Geological Survey
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
UC Davis
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Contacts: Chris Otahal, Wildlife Biologist, Barstow Field Office

Status: The list above represents a summary of the various management studies / management actions which are being carried out in support of the draft Amargosa River ACEC/WSR Plan. These projects are multi-year and BLM is currently working with partners to secure out-year funding for these programs.

The Ventura USFWS Office secured a \$162,000 grant through the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Federal Endangered Species Act Traditional Section 6 Program which will support the Sensitive Bird Species Spot Mapping / Cowbird Management Program for the 2013 and 2014 field seasons and provide funding to produce a multi-year summary report of the program to date. The Amargosa Conservancy secured funding to expand monitoring to include Willow Creek for the 2014 effort – this is an area which has not been covered under previous survey efforts. The Nature Conservancy, Amargosa Conservancy and PRBO, in coordination with BLM, recently submitted a Neotropical Bird Grant application which would expand upon our ongoing tamarisk removal and bird monitoring program to include monitoring of Willow Creek and fund focused surveys for Yellow-billed Cuckoo (a species being proposed for listing by the USFWS) along Willow Creek.

PRBO has recently provided the Barstow Field Office (BFO) a draft Amargosa Canyon Songbird Project 2013 Least Bell's Vireo and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Report and the General Bird Survey Report for the 2013 season.

The BFO completed a small scale willow planting effort on the Amargosa in an area which has been slow to recover after tamarisk removal efforts. This is a pilot experiment for this site, and if successful further plantings will take place in the future.

Through a partnership with USFWS, the Barstow Field Office secured a \$35,712 grant through the USFWS's Desert Fish Habitat Partnership Program (DFHP) to support Phase 1 (2013-2014) of the Tamarisk Removal/Habitat Enhancement program targeting habitat improvements for the Amargosa Speckled Dace and Amargosa Pupfish (this funding includes support for on-going fish monitoring as well as habitat improvements).

There have been some implementation timing issues and the DFHP committee has agreed to extend the grant period to cover the Phase 2 portion (2014-2015) of this project.

The BLM California State Office has provided additional fisheries funding for FY 2014 to conduct one mile of fish surveys on the Amargosa River. This will provide follow-up data to the baseline surveys carried out in 2010.

The BLM Desert District Office has secured funding to hire an Amargosa River Intern over the summer. The intern will provide program support to the various management efforts being carried out on the Amargosa River.

An article written by Chris Otahal will be appearing in the River Management Society's Spring 20014 Journal which discusses the results of the tamarisk removal / cowbird management program on sensitive bird species in the Amargosa River ACEC/WSR.

River Parkways Grant Program – Amargosa
Wild and Scenic River Trail

BLM Action: Worked with Amargosa Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy to secure a \$250,000 grant to build five miles of trail, trailhead, and remove / restore 25 acres of tamarisk.

Agency: BLM
The Nature Conservancy
Amargosa Conservancy

Contact: Chris Otahal, Wildlife Biologist, Barstow Field Office
Brad Mastin, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Barstow Field Office

Status: BLM is assisting with the coordination of the implementation phase of the project. A coordination meeting was held February 1, 2013 and the BLM Barstow Field Office continues to work with the Amargosa Conservancy in developing the necessary environmental documents in support of the project. The National Environmental Policy Act document (Environmental Assessment) has been reviewed by BLM and now is in the process of being finalized by the Amargosa Conservancy. Also, the Barstow Field Office has completed the Archeological/Cultural Surveys in support of this project.



Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Team Activities

BLM Action: The Barstow Field Office is cooperating with the Desert Tortoise Recovery office of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to implement the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan. The Barstow Field Office is providing representation for the BLM on the West Mojave Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) to set recovery action priorities.

Agency: BLM
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Various County, State and Federal Agencies

Contact: Chris Otahal, Wildlife Biologist, Barstow Field Office

Status: In December 2012 there was a multi-agency meeting in which the ground work for the production of the Recovery Action Plan was discussed. The Recovery Action Plan (v.1) was provided in March 2013 for initial RIT and management review. A Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group meeting will be held in Las Vegas on March 11, 2014 with the primary focus of updating managers on RIT efforts undertaken to date and for managers to discuss the direction and next steps for the RITs. The Barstow Field Office will participate in this meeting.

Silurian Valley Wind and Solar Facilities

BLM Action: Processing two separate applications filed by Iberdrola Renewables:

1) A 200 MW wind farm (67-133 turbines) including a new project substation with an overhead 287-kV transmission line involving 15,849 acres of public lands. Key issues are visual landscape and DOD flight corridor. Project is required to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Act.

2) A 200-MW solar PV project, including a new project substation with an overhead 1.5 mile 287 kV interconnection line on 7,218 acres of public lands. Solar proposal lies within a variance area per the Solar PEIS Record of Decision (ROD). Solar Variance determination is required by Solar PEIS; requires BLM National Director's concurrence to process further.

Both projects propose potentially connecting into the LADWP Mead-Victorville 287kV line (Boulder corridor). Project Feasibility, System Impact and Facility studies for both projects have not been completed. Proposed projects would be located north of Baker, CA and east of State Scenic Highway 127 (between Silurian Dry Lake and the historic

Boulder Corridor).

Agencies: BLM, Barstow Field Office
National Park Service (NPS)
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Pacific Region and Ventura Office
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Department of Defense (DOD)

Contacts: Joan Patrovsky, Realty Specialist/Project Manager, Barstow Field Office
Jeff Childers, Project Manager, CDD RECO Moreno Valley

Status: **Wind:** Revised Plan of Development (POD) received and deemed adequate to complete the application. Application has been forwarded to CDD RECO for environmental processing. DOD advises curtailment agreement would be required with applicant to avoid impacts to R-2508 flight corridor. Project area is transected by the National Historic Old Spanish Trail and historic Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad; historic visual landscape and cultural concerns; potential golden eagle and avian corridor concerns; and concerns have been raised by NPS, USFWS, Tribes and SHPO.

Solar: The proposed project location lies within a Solar PEIS variance area which requires two meetings with government entities and a public meeting. Filing requires BLM California State Director determination if processing application is warranted per Solar PEIS ROD. Concurrence by the BLM Director is required to proceed. Pre-application meetings with BLM and government agencies have been completed. SHPO, NPS, USFWS and Tribal concerns received. A public meeting is scheduled for March 27, 2014 in Barstow with a 30-day comment period.

North Peak Wind Farm

BLM Action: EON Climate and Renewables, Inc. filed an application for a 120 MW wind farm. This proposed project consists of up to 42 wind turbines, access roads, an off-site operations office, and a project substation with a 220kV interconnection line to the SCE Desert View Substation. Location borders the Towns of Apple Valley and Lucerne Valley, San Bernardino National Forest, Juniper Flats and the OMYA Mine.

Agency: BLM, Barstow Field Office
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
County of San Bernardino
California State Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources Division

Contact: Joan Patrovsky, Realty Specialist/Project Manager, Barstow Field Office
Frank McMenimen, Project Manager, Palms Springs/South Coast Office

Status: A revised Plan of Development was received and deemed complete. Meetings with BLM and other Federal, State and local agencies have been conducted. Concerns include cultural, visual landscape, eagles and wildland urban interface. The application has been forwarded to the California Desert District Renewable Energy Coordination Office (RECO) for environmental processing. The Notice of Intent for EIS is projected for summer 2014.

CalNev Pipeline

BLM Action: CalNev Pipeline, LLC has submitted an application to the Barstow Field Office for development of a sixteen inch pipeline for refined petroleum products. The proposed line parallels CalNev's current eight inch and fourteen inch pipelines for the majority of the proposed right-of-way with the major departure occurring to avoid the Mojave National Preserve. The pipeline project will run from Colton, California to Las Vegas, Nevada and includes one additional pump station near Baker, California.

Agencies: BLM, Barstow Field Office
BLM, Las Vegas Field Office
BLM, Needles Field Office
US Forest Service, San Bernardino National Forest
US Marine Corps, Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow
County of San Bernardino

Contacts: Rich Rotte, Project Manager

Status: The Barstow Field Office, County of San Bernardino, US Forest Service, Las Vegas Field Office and Needles Field Office have reviewed the comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the CalNev petroleum pipeline from Colton, CA to Las Vegas, NV. The general conformity process under the Clean Air Act is being finalized. BLM anticipates receipt of a Biological Opinion in March 2014 and publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report by July 2014.

DesertXpress Enterprises

BLM Action: DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC submitted an application to the Barstow Field Office for a high speed rail project using proven technology and would be constructed as a grade-separated, dedicated double track, passenger-only railroad predominantly in the median of or immediately alongside Interstate 15 (I-15), adding transportation capacity to the freeway corridor traveling from Victorville, California to Las Vegas, Nevada.

Agencies: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

Surface Transportation Board (STB)
BLM, Barstow Field Office
BLM, Las Vegas Field Office
BLM, Needles Field Office
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
National Park Service (NPS)
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT)

Contacts: Rich Rotte, Project Manager

Status: The BLM issued a right-of-way on December 19, 2011. DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC has submitted an Implementation Timeline and Current Summary Schedule that shows the start of construction at the end of 2014.

Soda Mountain Solar Project

BLM Action: Bechtel has filed an application for the Soda Mountain solar project. This project is a 358 MW solar photovoltaic power plant proposal located approximately 6 miles southwest of Baker along both sides of Interstate 15 in San Bernardino County, CA. A right-of-way (ROW) grant would be required to approve the Project and ancillary facilities. The Project footprint would cover 2,557 acres of public lands administered by BLM and require the relocation of the Razor Road. The current ROW request is for 4,179 acres.

Contacts: Jeff Childers and Jose Najar, Project Manager, RECO California Desert District Office

Status: A Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released for public comment on December 4, 2013. The 90-day public comment period ends on March 3, 2014. A Final EIS is planned to be released by July 2014. Discussions are continuing with the Mojave National Preserve and other NPS personnel in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere.

Coolwater to Lugo Transmission Project (formerly *South of Kramer*)

BLM Action: Southern California Edison filed an application for a 500220/115 kV Transmission combination powerline on public and private lands (Daggett to Hesperia; Coolwater to Lugo substations).

Contacts: Jeff Childers, Project Manager, RECO California Desert District Office

Status: A full Plan of Development was submitted to the BLM in December 2013. Field visits with other state and federal agencies have occurred and a Notice of Intent for EIS is

planned for late spring-early summer.

Lucerne Valley Solar Energy Project

BLM Action: Celtic Energy Corporation has filed an application for a solar project. This project, Lucerne Valley Solar, is a 45 MW alternating current solar photovoltaic power plant proposal located approximately one-half mile south of State Highway 247, and approximately three miles east of Camp Rock Road. The project is also generally seven miles east and southeast of the community of Lucerne in San Bernardino County. A Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision were initially issued on October 5, 2010 for the project. The Project footprint would cover 421 acres of public lands administered by BLM.

Contacts: Cedric Perry, Project Manager, RECO California Desert District Office

Status: Refresh surveys have been completed by the applicant and approved by the BLM. The California Fish and Wildlife has requested a gap analysis to be conducted to determine if the 2010 EIS fulfills the requirements of the CEQA document. Submission of funds for the project cost recovery account is pending.

Special Recreation Permits

BLM Action: October 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014.

Contact: Rusty Gates, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Barstow Field Office

Status: From October 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014 a total of 110 Special Recreation Permits (SRP) have been administered by the Barstow Field Office. The breakdown consists of 13 Competitive Events, 7 Competitive and Commercial Events, 2 Commercial Events, 7 Organized Groups and 81 Vendor Permits with multiple vending dates throughout the year. The first week of February consisted of the King of the Hammers event which had an estimated 45,000 spectators.



Film Permits

BLM Action: October 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014

Contact: Timothy Hough, Park Ranger, Barstow Field Office
Rusty Gates, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Barstow Field Office

Status: From October 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014, a total of 55 film permits have been administered by the Barstow Field Office. This consisted of 52 commercial film permits and 3 letters of authorization for non-commercial filming projects to students enrolled in a university related to the filming industry that must complete a class assignment. The most popular shoot locations included Dumont Dunes, El Mirage, Johnson Valley, and Silurian.

Recreation Fee Sites

BLM Action: Dumont Dunes OHV Area (Recreation Fee Site)

Contact: Timothy Hough, Park Ranger, Barstow Field Office
Rusty Gates, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Barstow Field Office

Status: From October 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014 Dumont Dunes OHV Area visitation had an estimated visitation of 20,808. Visitation has dropped significantly compared to last fiscal year which may be due in part to the 16-day furlough which occurred in October 2013. There are 10 Vendors that sell Dumont Dunes Recreation Use Passes (RUP). These vendors have sold a total of 2,483 RUP (does not include RUP's for Martin Luther King and President's Day). The break-down of the passes sold consisted of: 712 Weekly Passes (\$30), 1,203 Holiday Weekly Passes (\$40), 47 Annual Non-Holiday Passes (\$90), 521 Annual with Holiday Passes (\$120). A break-down of the 1,203 Weekly Holiday Passes are: 198 Halloween, 691 Thanksgiving, 314 New Year's (Martin Luther King and President's Day have not been reconciled at the time of this report).

The Dumont Dunes Subgroup, under the authority of the California Desert District Desert Advisory Council, continues to provide input to the BLM regarding issues pertinent to the Dumont Dunes OHV Area.

BLM Action: Afton Canyon Campground and Owl Canyon Campground (Recreation Fee Sites)

Contact: Rose Beardshear, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Barstow Field Office
Rusty Gates, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Barstow Field Office
Timothy Hough, Park Ranger, Barstow Field Office
Vicki Salazar, Maintenance Specialist, Barstow Field Office
Danny Pando, Civil Engineering Technician, Barstow Field Office

Status: October 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014 there have been 191 Recreation Use Permits (RUP) collected from Afton Canyon Campground with an estimated 488 visitors. There have been 319 RUP's collected with an estimated 872 visitors to the Owl Campground during the same time period.

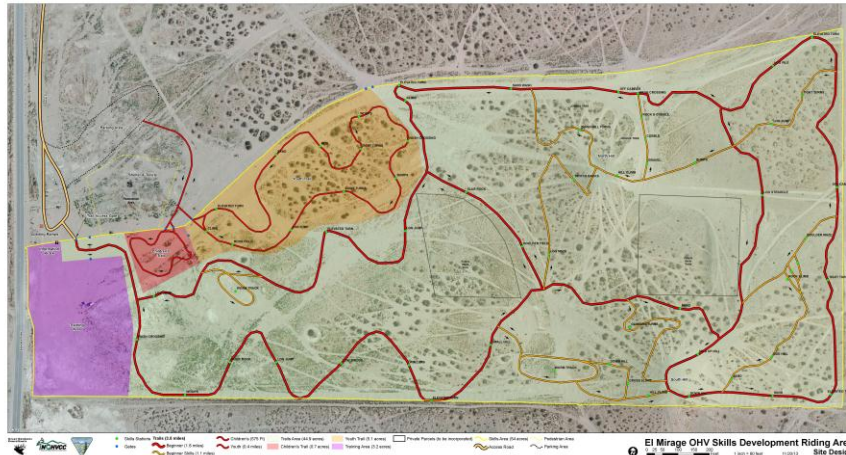
BLM Action: El Mirage OHV Area

Contact: Rose Beardshear, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Barstow Field Office

Status: The 54-acre OHV Skills Development and Training Course opened its gates to the public immediately following the ribbon cutting ceremony on February 8, 2014. With MANY partners, the BLM Barstow Field Office constructed a state-of-the-art OHV training center in the El Mirage OHV Area that hosts a tiered training circuit to help people learn, then improve their OHV riding skills. The area now boasts:

- A trailhead with a vault toilet, 24-foot shade ramada, group barbeque, fire pit, information kiosk and loading ramps
- An open OHV area where two OHV classes can be conducted at a time
- A children's track for children up to 9 years old and machines up to 100cc, which provides a short, one-way trail with gentle turns
- A youth trail for youth up to 15 years and machines less than 250cc, with several stations for youth to learn skills such as hill climb, rock field, log crossings, tight turns, bumps, elevated turns, etc.
- Beginner and skills trails with several more advanced skills areas with work-arounds for those riders not comfortable completing any specific skill. Some of the skill areas are whoops, slick rocks, wash crossing, log jump, low bridge, cross slope, climbing turns, down-hill, boulder field, log pile, etc.

The training area was made possible through a grant from the California State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division and the efforts of many partners and volunteers including but not limited to the National OHV Conservation Council, Great Outdoors Consultants, Lynn Construction, California Conservation Corps, California State Park staff from Hungry Valley and Hollister, Friends of El Mirage, AmeriCorps NCCC, Los Angeles County staff and San Bernardino County staff.



Volunteer Program

BLM Action: OHV Ambassador Program

Contacts: Cecilia Franklin, Volunteer Coordinator, Barstow Field Office
Rose Beardshear, Interpretive Specialist, Barstow Field Office

Status: The BFO continues to have a successful volunteer program with hundreds of volunteers throughout the field office. On February 15, 2014 the Friends of Razor Road (FORR) held their 4th annual desert cleanup. Registration started at 11 AM with every volunteer signing up and receiving a T-shirt provided by the FORR. A mandatory tailgate safety meeting was held—keeping with the BLM motto “Safety first, every job every time”. Groups of volunteers dispersed to clean out fire pits, campsites, and a general clean-up of the Razor Road area. The clean-up ended around 2 PM with the FORR providing a BBQ lunch for all the volunteers who participated. The clean-up was a huge success, with 174 registered volunteers. A special thanks to Keith Daigneault, BLM OHV Ambassador, for organizing the Razor Road clean-up and fundraising to provide T-shirts and a BBQ for all the volunteers that helped out.

Additionally this spring, cleanups are scheduled in Dumont Dunes, Giant Rock and El Mirage all organized and/or assisted by our non-profit partners.

Once again, the Barstow Field Office Desert Discovery Center partnership will join forces with the Barstow High School Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Academy and host a huge Earth Day event at the local high school on April 23, 2014. We will have nearly 800 5th and 6th grade students and 120 STEM students attending the event. This year, partners and vendors are going to be training the STEM students to provide 25 different hands on “Earth Friendly” activities ranging from disaster preparedness training to painting murals of various desert plants

and animals. The event will promote environmental awareness in a fun and festive atmosphere. Our Desert Discovery Center continues to use volunteers and partners to provide environmental education programs in an effort to increase student's knowledge and awareness about the Mojave Desert environment and associated challenges.

BLM Action: National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) AmeriCorps Youth Crew

Contact: Rose Beardshear, Interpretive Specialist, Barstow Field Office
Timothy Hough, Park Ranger, Barstow Field Office



Status: In an area of traditionally underserved populations, the team Silver 2 of AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) partnered with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for environmental conservation, stewardship and community development throughout the Mojave Desert. From January 15 to March 21, 2014, the team of eight NCCC members will be working on several different projects during their 10 weeks of service in Barstow and the surrounding regions. The focus of their

service will be to connect the desert communities of Barstow and Shoshone with the outdoors and to continue the BLM's efforts to reach underserved populations in terms of recreational opportunities and environmental education. The projects completed in these communities will help increase eco-friendly tourist options, as well as add to the environmental education opportunities for local schools. The NCCC team will be partnering closely with the BLM throughout their whole project.

They began their service in Barstow where they focused on restoration activities, including painting, landscaping, and carving new trails at the Desert Discovery Center (DDC). The team has already reconfigured and patched 600 feet of irrigation system, painted and renovated 860 square feet of an art classroom, and removed 100 pounds of debris during their first week at the DDC. Silver 2 also served at Juniper Flats, rehabilitating a quarter mile of trail, installing 49 informative signs, and repairing 500 feet of fencing. The team is currently serving at El Mirage Dry Lake Off-Highway Recreation Area completing restoration and fence reconstruction. In their week of service at El Mirage the team has removed 900 pounds of invasive species, installed 23 informative signs, and repaired over 1,850 feet of fencing. The team will also be serving in Shoshone during mid-February, where the team will work with the Amargosa Conservancy completing trail maintenance work on the Amargosa River Trail and Shoshone Village Trail.

Wilderness Activities

BLM Action: Wilderness Outreach and Education

Contact: Rose Beardshear, Interpretive Specialist, Barstow Field Office
Art Basulto, Park Ranger, Barstow Field Office

Status: With new wilderness lyrics written to the tune of the Wanderer, the Desert Discovery Partnership launched into their new afterschool program focused on the celebration of the 50th Anniversary to the Wilderness Act. Over a five month period, using music, photography, drums, sign language, line dancing, recycled art, field trips to wilderness and countless hands-on activities, children will experience wilderness like never before. The season will end with a music video, produced by Main Street Murals, and a beautiful wilderness mural to add to the gallery of murals along Route 66 in the city of Barstow.

California Historic Route 66

BLM Action: Needles to Barstow Corridor Management Plan (CMP) and other actions

Contact: Doran Sanchez, Partnership Outreach/Development Specialist, Barstow Field Office

Status: The BLM, in coordination with the California Historic Route 66 Association (CHR66A) is preparing a CMP for the segment of the historic Route 66 within the BLM California Desert District that extends from the western city limits of Barstow, California to the Colorado River. Public scoping meetings occurred February 25, 2014 at the Harvey House Railroad Depot in Barstow and February 27, 2014 at the Needles High School cafeteria in Needles. Additionally a 1-hour Webinar was hosted by the CMP contractor Lardner-Klein on February 27. CMP information is available at <http://www.route66ca.org> and follow the link.

In addition to supporting preparation of the CMP, the BLM is developing and will be implementing a long-term education/outreach strategy to highlight and promote the adjacent BLM National Conservation Lands/public land historic and cultural resources along Route 66. The National Conservation Land units that are either adjacent to or visible from Route 66 include nine wildernesses and one Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

By April 2014, the BLM will prepare a Route 66 brochure and install a turnout/kiosk at 5-Mile. This site is the eastern most entrance into California along Route 66 to lands managed by the BLM and provides public access from Interstate 40. This site provides an excellent opportunity to partner with the City of Needles and provide information about the diverse opportunities for recreation and discovery on BLM-managed public lands while promoting Route 66.

Congressionally Designated Johnson Valley Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Area

BLM Action: Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area

Contact: Katrina Symons, Field Manager, Barstow Field Office

Status: The BLM is working cooperatively with the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), Twentynine Palms, California, to implement the withdrawal and reservation of public land in the Johnson Valley OHV Area identified in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-66) (NDAA 2014). The NDAA 2014 also established the “Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area” which includes a Shared Use Area (SUA) to be managed for recreational and natural resources conservation purposes ten months of the year and for military purposes two months of the year.

Cooperative and coordinated actions implemented since December 26, 2013 by staff from both the BLM and the United States Marine Corps (USMC) include, but are not limited to: 1/ Execution of two Memorandum of Understanding to authorize BLM to permit and administer a commercial recreational activity upon withdrawn federal public land under the jurisdiction of the USMC, pursuant to a Special Recreation Permit (SRP). The OHV race events occurred on January 26, 2014 (Desert Motorcycle Club) and February 1-7, 2014 (King of the Hammers); 2/ Public outreach jointly conducted during the King of the Hammers (KOH) event to disseminate information related to the withdrawal and reservation of land in the Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area; 3/ Unified command for law enforcement established during the KOH event for the purpose of minimizing conflicts from recreational incursions into the MCAGCC as live fire training was occurring on the military base. California State Parks Law Enforcement assisted with patrols of the previously designated military base boundary; and 4/ Initiated the development of the Resource Management Group (RMG) Charter and discussed holding a series of public meetings starting as early as April 2014; areas; and

Additional actions taken by BLM since December 26, 2013 include, but are not limited to: 1/ Contacted SRP applicants to provide information related to the NDAA 2014. Since KOH was the last SRP to be held within the Exclusive Military Use Area (EMUA), ten race events in 2014 were cancelled, race courses/race formats modified, and/or the event moved to another location; 2/ Contacted the Inland Empire Film Commission to provide information related to the NDAA 2014 so that commercial film permit applicants could adjust their shoot locations to avoid the EMUA; 3/ Initiated contacts with user groups offering to attend their meetings to provide information related to the NDAA 2014; 4/ Contacted the grazing lease permittee for the Ord Mountain Allotment to provide information of changes to allotment due to the NDAA 2014; and 5/

Reviewing reports for mining claims and right-of-ways for notification of the NDAA 2014.

BACKGROUND: The 188,000 acre BLM-designated Johnson Valley OHV Area was altered by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014. The legislation, signed by the President on December 26, 2013, directs the Johnson Valley OHV Area be divided as follows: 1/ Approximately 88,000 acres (approximately 79,000 acres of public land and approximately 9,000 acres of private and State land to be acquired by the Department of the Navy) is designated an EMUA; 2/ Approximately 56,000 acres (approximately 53,000 acres of public land and approximately 3,000 acres of private and State land to be acquired by the Department of the Navy) is designated a SUA to be managed by the BLM for public recreation and natural resources conservation except for 60 days per year that the land will be used and managed by the USMC for military training, as well as two company objective areas (approximately 22 acres each) to be used exclusively by the USMC for military training; and 3/ Approximately 43,000 acres of the BLM-designated Johnson Valley OHV Area to the west of the EMUA boundary line, together with the SUA, to be designated the “Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area”, totaling approximately 100,000 acres.

